

VIII. Memoirs

Rev. Keith Alan McDonald

September 4, 1957---July 9, 2008

It was with great sadness that we in Yellowstone Conference learned of the death of Keith McDonald. At the age of 50 years and 10 months, he left this earth behind as the result of an automobile accident near Keenesburg, Colorado. He also left behind so many who loved him and he them. At the center of those loving relationships was his wife Yong Hui [Lee] McDonald, his children Fletcher and Nicole [husband John Peters], and his grandchildren Teila, Jamie and Lindsay, along with his parents Desmond and Bernice and Yong Hui's mother, sister and brother as well. Keith was one of 4 siblings; Jeaneane, Kevin, Marvin and himself. His brother Marvin preceded him in death in 1981. They all loved him. They all miss him being here to love them. And there were many others---

In all the churches that he served in Yellowstone and Rocky Mountain Conferences of the UMC, there were so many who loved him. He served as pastor to folks in Plains and Paradise MT, Hinsdale and Glasgow MT, Buffalo and Kaycee WY, and Keenesburg and Hudson CO. He was not only the appointed minister to the United Methodist churches there, but ministered to the entire community wherever he was. In both Yellowstone and Rocky Mountain Conferences he had many friends. His colleagues and co-workers for Christ; his connections across church and community life are too many to mention. There always seemed to be enough of Keith McDonald to go around. His journey of life was broad and his sojourners many, but Keith found time and energy for it all. He loved life and the people that made up his life's work and joy. He loved God and didn't mind showing it. He made a loving difference in the world, one person, one relationship at a time. He urged everyone he met to connect more deeply with the Christ he loved and served.

In his last article for the South Weld Sun, a newspaper to which he was a regular contributor, Keith talked in his faith column about the journey of life as a 'treasure hunt', where God's gifts and blessings are all around us if we will take notice and be curious and brave enough to receive them. He named some of God's 'roadside treasures' as appreciation, beauty, compassion, creativity, diversity, enthusiasm, flexibility, goodness, gratitude, happiness, hope, integrity, industry, joy, kindness, love, mercy, peace, reliability, self-sacrifice, wisdom, and whole-heartedness. These were the 'jewels' to be discovered. There is not one of those qualities and gifts that were not a part of the life of Keith McDonald. Stories could be told about each one, and the way that he embodied them. His own life was faceted by music, martial arts, dogs, Greek and Korean language, beard growing, bow hunting, drum-making, computers, entrepreneurship, canoeing, clarinet playing, fishing, writing, preaching, hiking, black-powder rifle making, community organizing, Native American culture, exploring, teaching, challenging, gardening, and discovering--life.

At his memorial service, appropriately held at the Weld Central HS auditorium where the youth he had meals with almost every week loved him, with words for the service written by himself some 20 years before, Keith was

remembered by colleagues and friends from many parts of his many journeys for all of this and more. His grandchildren let loose pigeons on the grounds of the school afterward, a tribute to his long love affair with those birds. On the front of the program that day was a picture of Keith on his new recumbent bicycle---poised for and envisioning whatever adventure was to come.

Godspeed, Keith McDonald, Godspeed.

Helen Louise Hill

Helen Louise Hill was born February 12, 1932, in Moscow, Idaho, the daughter of Edward B. and Louise (nee Riddle) Hill. She died on November 2, 2008 in Asheville, North Carolina.

Helen was attracted to humanitarian assistance and service as a foreign missionary from her early membership in Lander Wyoming's Methodist church and the Methodist Youth Fellowship (MYF). When she attended Youth Camp at Meadowlark Lake in the Big Horn Mountains of Wyoming the summer after eighth grade (1946) she heard God ask her to be a Christian and to work for Him. With this in mind she studied Spanish in high school where she graduated as valedictorian and majored in Latin American studies in the university in Denver.

After teaching social science, English and Spanish in junior and senior high school for two years, the Board of Missions sent her to Scarritt College for three quarters, then to San Jose, Costa Rica, for further language study for another quarter. In August 1957 she arrived in Matanzas, Cuba, to teach English in Colegio Irene Toand. She was very happy there in spite of the revolution. It was with sadness that she left in October 1960.

In 1961 Helen became Director of a girls' dormitory of 120 girls at Internado Ethel Thomas in Mexico City. Ages of the girls ranged from 4 years to 28 years. At that time Helen was but twenty-nine years old. The complex consisted of a church school and a dormitory. The dormitory was separated by only a wall from the Methodist school – necessary in those days because a Bible was not allowed in the school, but could be used in the dormitory.

After a few years, Helen's work moved from the dormitory to assist refugees from Cuba who had found their way to Mexico. She assisted over 500 Cuban refugees, explaining before her death that it was the most satisfying experience of her career. She had been instrumental in renting a house in Mexico City to serve those fleeing from Castro's dictatorship.

After completing thirty-seven and a half years in service to the Lord, Helen retired in July 1993, and moved immediately into Brooks-Howell Home, Asheville, North Carolina, where she lived until her death on November 2, 2008. Brooks-Howell is owned and governed by United Methodist Women through the Women's Division of the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church.